Minutes from NFPORS Q&A Teleconference for DOI
September 17, 2003

Present:
Russ Berry (chair), Sandy Gregory (BLM), Jeff Whitney (FWS), Trish Roller (FWS), Debbie Downey (FWS), Karen Machaud (BLM), John Segar (FWS), Dan Deerborne (FWS), Al Murphey (BLM), Mike Van Hemelryck (NPS), Roddy Bauman (FWS)

This is the first Q&A conference with all DOI bureaus. Previous conferences were held with the bureaus separately. The approach is to answer questions about the use of NFPORS in a round-robin style.

1. In opening discussion, I took the following actions:
   - Check the QA tool to make sure that errors are not generated if the Actual Accomplishment is greater than the Planned Accomplishment. If the tool is generating such errors then add a change request. Perhaps the request should only generate an error if the Actual Accomplishment exceeds the Planned Accomplishment by an order of magnitude.
   - Add a change request that modifies the Treatment portal so that whenever an Actual Completion Date is entered, an attention-getting note reminds the User to make a CC Observation. Perhaps a pop-up window could be used.

2. Q: When should CC Observations be made in a situation where the long-term effect of the Treatment may not be realized for up to two years? This is especially important when there may in fact be a short-term degenerative effect for particular Treatment Types.
   A: The Treatment Unit is a persistent object. It is entirely possible to make Observations (in a monitoring Activity) at any time in the future. If, in the short term, there is a CC degeneration (e.g. CC 2 -> CC3), then go ahead and make the short-term Observation, but remember to make additional Observations in the future. You may remind yourself of this requirement by adding a new Monitoring Activity to the Project.

3. Q: Are Fire Use acres included in the Accomplishment Report?
   A: This is an error that was recently identified. It has been corrected throughout the Management Dashboard and will be corrected in the next release (v1.71) of the Data Collection Tool (nfpors.gov).

   SPECIAL NOTE: the URL for the Management Dashboard has recently changed. Please update your bookmarks:
   http://dashboard.nfpors.gov

4. Q: How will the Carryover feature work? (note: v. 1.7 – now released includes this feature)

A: The Treatment/Activity Carryover feature was added to allow the recording of Accomplishments over two consecutive Fiscal Years. Its primary purpose is to allow Treatments or Activities that were Actually Initiated towards the end of a Fiscal Year to be finished in the subsequent Fiscal Year.

For Treatments, this is accomplished simply by filling in the "FYxx Actual Accomplishment" field. For a Treatment that was planned, initiated, but not completed in FY03, for example, there would be a field for "FY03 Actual Accomplishment" and a field for "FY04 Actual Accomplishment." When the Treatment is complete, the Actual Completion Date should be entered.

Planning and Administration Activities are slightly different in that there is no Actual Accomplishment (i.e. acres, miles, feet, or each) recorded. There are, however, actual dates. The actual dates can also span FYs for Activities.

For both Activities and Treatments, the planned dates must be confined to the same fiscal year.

5. Q: How does the Split Work Agent feature work?
   A: (I provided an online demonstration using the training site. A summary follows.)

   From the Treatment portal, scroll to the bottom, in the Planned Direct Costs Portlet, Click “New Planned Direct Cost.” In the new portal, enter the Planned Direct Cost for the second Work Agent, identify the second Work Agent and add any other associated information (e.g. contract number) and Click “Save.” When you have finished entering the new Work Agents and PDCs, Click on the Treatment hyperlink to get back to the Treatment portal. You will notice that the new total PDC for the Treatment is represented in the “Edit Treatment” Portlet. It is the sum of the separate PDCs for all Work Agents.

6. Q: Is spending HFR funds on fencing acceptable.
   A: I did not have the immediate answer to this. I checked with Tim Hartzell and the answer is “No.” If there is some substantial justification, then please describe a rationale. I will make a follow-up inquiry.

7. Q: What NFPORS training opportunities are there?
   A: Go to http://nfpors.gov do not login and you will see a link that leads you to a training schedule and registration process.

   It was clear that specialized training in at least two areas (Split Work Agent and Reporting) was required. I recommended that the User call the NFPORS Help Desk (703-917-2NFP) and try to arrange a theme focused training session with Ms. Kim Amin. If that process fails, then contact me and we will get it worked out.

I have arranged to lead a 10/22/03 online training session on NFPORS reporting. Go to the NFPORS Training Opportunities page to register. Registration is limited to 15 persons. The primary focus will be BRIO and Excel ad hoc reporting.

8. Q: How should the QA tool be used?
   A: First and foremost, the Quality Assurance tool is not meant to be a scorecard. As you know, we have always faced the question of how much control to exercise over the data entry process... Too little leads to many caveats and exceptions and the lack of uniformity... while too much control is viewed as artificial and can cause users to enter erroneous data simply for the sake of meeting unnecessary requirements.

   So, the Quality Assurance tool is a soft evaluation of suspected problems and is not necessarily the last word on what is absolutely wrong with the data quality. In fact, of the 14 possible errors, there are only three (rules # 1, 9, and 10) that indicate the absolute existence of a certain problem that needs to be fixed.

   Other than those three rules, my general recommendation is: ignore any QA errors that are not in fact errors. Many of the errors are the result of system changes that were made in the course of FY03. Review those errors and look for patterns. Try to avoid making those kinds of errors as you work through FY04.

9. Q: When will FY03 data be docked down?
   A: October 30, 2003. After that date, you will not be allowed to make changes to Treatments or Activities that were conducted in FY03. (except for those that are carried over.)

10. Q: Can I get a copy of the FY04 plan?
    A: ftp://130.11.63.1 anonymous login contains a zipped file called "2004 NFPORS Summary Reports Final"

    This is the file that Allan Fitzsimmons is using.

11. Q: How can we get reports from the CA module?
    A: Unfortunately, CA reports are not available on line. I will direct the contractor to make a CA dump available through the Dashboard immediately. Until then the dump will be provided by request whenever it is needed.
    (note: a dump was provided on 9/29/03 – call me for a copy.)

12. Q: When can we expect to see the changes to the CA module that were requested in June?
    A: The changes are in the SCR list, but there are many clarifications that are needed. I asked Al Murphy to arrange a teleconference to clarify some points. I have a list of questions in hand that are based on the June request.

13. Q: Is the FY02 NFPORS data available?
    A: Yes. In the Management Dashboard you will find a link to FY02 data for HFR and BAER. Be Warned: comprehensive DOI data only starts for FY03, however, some units have entered comprehensive data for previous years.

Finally:
In my notes, I failed to fully capture one of the questions. My notes simply say, “Can I keep an acre”

Does anyone know what this might mean? Did anyone’s question not get included in this report? Contact me.

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